

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



June 25, 2004

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-39-04

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
COUNTY REFUGEE COORDINATORS**REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL**

- ☐ State Law Change
- ☐ Federal Law or Regulation Change
- ☐ Court Order
- ☐ Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- ☒ Initiated by CDSS

SUBJECT: NEWLY ARRIVING HMONG REFUGEES FROM THAILAND

The purpose of this letter is to share some information about new Hmong refugees arriving in California this summer. The United States (U.S.) Department of State has been processing applications from Hmong refugees living at the Buddhist Temple of Wat Tham Krabok in Thailand. There are an estimated 15,500 Hmong who can apply for U.S. entry for family reunification. About 31 percent are expected to come to California, with the first arrivals as early as June 2004.

The federal government relies on voluntary agencies to provide housing, food, clothing, and medical and social services referrals in the first 90 days of a refugee arriving in the U.S. However, many refugees need assistance beyond the first 90 days of arriving. This letter is to help communities that may be impacted by this resettlement to prepare for the arrival.

About 60 percent of the Hmong being considered for resettlement are 18 years or younger. The children living at Wat Tham Krabok were born there and have had limited opportunities for learning. Prior to resettlement, your local schools will need to be prepared for this population. There are significant numbers of married teenagers with children. Programs for teen mothers aged 15 -21 will also need to be prepared.

About 36 percent are 19 to 64 years and may have no work experience relevant to the California labor market. About 4 percent are 65 or older. These adults may have a more difficult time transitioning and learning English. The languages spoken are Hmong, Thai, and Lao. Local communities may wish to assess whether there is the capacity and resources for Adult Basic Education and English-as-a-Second Language classes.

The Hmong have received little or no health care in Thailand. All new arrivals have had an overseas health screening and will again be screened once they arrive in California. Health histories are limited and there is no way to know about the extent of chronic illnesses. There has been little or no dental care. There are cases of children with serious tooth decay problems. Local health communities may wish to plan for translators to assist in providing medical services.

Although newly arriving refugees will be assisted by voluntary agencies and their U.S. families, finding housing may be an issue. The average family unit is 4.5. The availability and affordability of housing for these families is a concern in the more urban areas of the state.

If your county currently has a Hmong community, then your county may receive a number of the new arrivals who will be reunified with family members. Please see the attached chart "Arrivals from Laos to California October 1982 through September 2003." We strongly urge you to plan for the needs of these refugees and to share the information in this letter with local agencies such as law enforcement, health care providers, school districts, housing authorities, etc.

Also attached is a list with contact information for refugee coordinators in counties which have a large number of refugees. Among other duties, the refugee coordinators plan and implement strategies and operating procedures for their county's refugee services and programs. They are a resource and have experience in helping refugees successfully become part of their new communities.

At the State level, the Refugee Programs Bureau (RPB) is preparing for the arrival of the Hmong refugees by coordinating with the California Department of Health Services, the California Department of Education, the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement, county refugee coordinators, refugee voluntary agencies, county welfare departments and the U. S. Department of State to keep current on resettlement activities and resources. Please refer to the California Department of Social Services' RPB's website at www.dss.cahwnet.gov/refugeeprogram for information on the refugee program. As the RPB learns more about the resettlement of the Hmong refugees, we will continue to share that information.

If you have any questions, please call me at (916) 657-3442, or Ms. Thuan Nguyen, Chief, Refugee Programs Bureau, at (916) 654-4356.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By

VENUS GARTH, Chief
Child Care and Refugee Programs Branch

c: CWDA

Attachments

**Arrivals from Laos to California
October 1982 through September 2003**

County	Refugee Arrivals from Laos
ALAMEDA	1,422
BUTTE	1,197
CALAVERAS	0
COLUSA	6
CONTRA COSTA	1,513
DEL NORTE	66
FRESNO	13,290
GLENN	209
HUMBOLDT	437
KERN	113
KINGS	74
LOS ANGELES	1,211
MADERA	7
MARIN	15
MENDOCINO	242
MERCED	4,649
MONTEREY	0
NEVADA	1
ORANGE	1,763
PLACER	28
RIVERSIDE	580
SACRAMENTO	5,711
SAN BERNARDINO	142
SAN DIEGO	3,731
SAN FRANCISCO	453
SAN JOAQUIN	4,106
SAN MATEO	112
SANTA BARBARA	490
SANTA CLARA	716
SANTA CRUZ	9
SHASTA	357
SISKIYOU	17
SOLANO	129
SONOMA	359
STANISLAUS	1,148
SUTTER	155
TULARE	2,205
VENTURA	26
YOLO	89
YUBA	1,302
UNKNOWN	1,745
TOTAL	49,825

Note: Data does not reflect county-to-county or state-to-state migration. Data includes all refugees from Laos which may include Hmong, Lahu, Laotian, and Mien refugees.

ALAMEDA

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CONTRA COSTA

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County Refugee Coordinator
Contra Costa County Department of
Employment and Human Services
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FRESNO

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FRESNO

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LOS ANGELES

Ms. Adine Forman, Acting Program Manager
Acting County Refugee Coordinator
CSS - County of Los Angeles
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MERCED

Mr. Phil Flores, Deputy Director
County Refugee Coordinator
Merced County Human Services Agency
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Merced, CA 95341-0112
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ORANGE

Ms. Dolores Mejia
County Refugee Coordinator
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SACRAMENTO

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SAN DIEGO

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SAN DIEGO

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SAN DIEGO

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SAN FRANCISCO

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SAN JOAQUIN

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SANTA CLARA

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SANTA CLARA

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SANTA CLARA

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STANISLAUS

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STANISLAUS

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YOLO

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